

# Mobu's Diary

摸布想自己賺罐罐：黑山的烏鴉原創故事集

**Author:** Kathy Lam **Illustrator:** Kathy Lam **Publisher:** Star East Press

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**Rights sold:** Japanese, Korean, Thai

**BFT2.0 Translator:** Kevin Wang and Michelle Kuo

"Every day is the same, and I'm tired of it. I want to become a self-sufficient cat. I want to earn my own cat food!"

This is Mobu, a three-year-old female calico cat with white fur, gray-brown spots, an adorable face, and pink paws. Mobu no longer wants to be a pampered house cat. Determined to earn her keep, she sets her sights on working at a cat café to pay for her own meals. Introverted and not fond of being petted, Mobu writes a deceptive résumé, claiming she "enjoys interacting with humans." Despite her fear of strangers and her desire to slack off, she bravely takes the first step toward independence.

Kathy Lam's popular and delightfully funny tale is perfect for animal lovers of all ages. Bursting with charm, laughter, and tender moments, this story invites readers to follow Mobu wherever she goes.



## Kathy Lam

Born in Hong Kong, Kathy Lam graduated from the Illustration Department of the University of Brighton in the United Kingdom. Her works often feature animals and are known for their bold yet intricate style. Kathy has collaborated with the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society, N.I.P. Anonymous Distillery, and Hang Seng Bank. She enjoys using pencils and opaque watercolors for her artwork, and when not drawing, she engages in model-making or playing games. In 2023, she was a finalist for the 14th Golden Comic Awards and was selected as an exhibiting artist for the 2024 Taiwan Pavilion at the Angoulême International Comics Festival in France. The overseas rights of *Mobu's Diary* have been sold in Japanese, Korean, and Thai.

# In This Whimsical Tale, A House Cat Takes a Job at a Cat Café

by Kevin Wang

The genre of anthropomorphic cat art predates even ancient Egypt, where divine beings were often depicted in feline form. In *Mobu's Diary*, the debut comic by illustrator Kathy Lam, we encounter a delightful take on this enduring fascination.

Mobu, a house cat, decides she's had enough of her pampered life. Determined to earn her own cans of food, she ventures into the world of part-time work at a cat café. More earnest than the lazy, cynical Garfield, Mobu is aware of her limitations and conscious even of her naivete. From the outset, Mobu declares: "Acting cute isn't my thing." She stretches the truth on her résumé, dons a tempura shrimp hat to impress her interviewer, and, after landing the job, seeks guidance from a colleague—a Maine Coon cat who effortlessly reads body language and persuades customers to buy more cookies. Little by little, Mobu steps out of

her comfort zone and even achieves small feats of heroism, from soothing a student who fails a test to thwarting a predatory insurance salesman.

What truly sets *Mobu's Diary* apart is its artistic style. Endearing without being overly cutesy, dozens of panels in the book could easily adorn the walls of an office. In fact, Kathy Lam's prints frequently sell out soon after being announced to her large following. Human eyes are simplified into the Chinese character for eight (八), while motion lines, dialogue bubbles, and panel borders all appear hand-drawn. Straight lines remain fluid, and errant pencil marks, watercolor bleeds, and coarse graphite textures lend an organic, playful feel to the illustrations.

In an afterword, Lam mentions her formative years of studying illustration in the UK, where she learned to let go of trying to draw perfectly. A professor praised a doodle she made during an

anxious moment. It was a revelation: "They don't worry about the completeness... I never thought that something I made casually could be considered finished work." This loose, sketch-like style captures Mobu's personality—her anxiety, stubbornness, and conscientiousness—with an immediacy that a more polished portrait could never achieve. The unpredictable gradients in Lam's watercolor washes are like a cat that resists over-control.

Lam, who lives between Hong Kong and Taiwan, subtly weaves in elements of both locales. In the café, visitors are required to change into house slippers. One character wears a sailor-style uniform, still common in Japan, while minor characters have Western names like George and Emma. The European architecture of the city creates a setting that feels both familiar and otherworldly.

Many readers have described *Mobu's Diary* as (liao)yu, or "healing." Perhaps it's because we often look to cats for comfort. In cat cafés—especially in Taiwan and Japan—these animals offer gentle therapy. Lam turns this idea on

its head, asking what it's like for a cat to work in a café. Mobu saunters around the house on two feet, bikes to work, and dashes along the wall like a superhero to escape a zealous fan. We find satisfaction in seeing personas projected onto cats, whose thoughts are not easily deciphered. Their logic often eludes us, and they are

comically apathetic to human concerns (Mobu prefers to sleep on things her human needs to use).

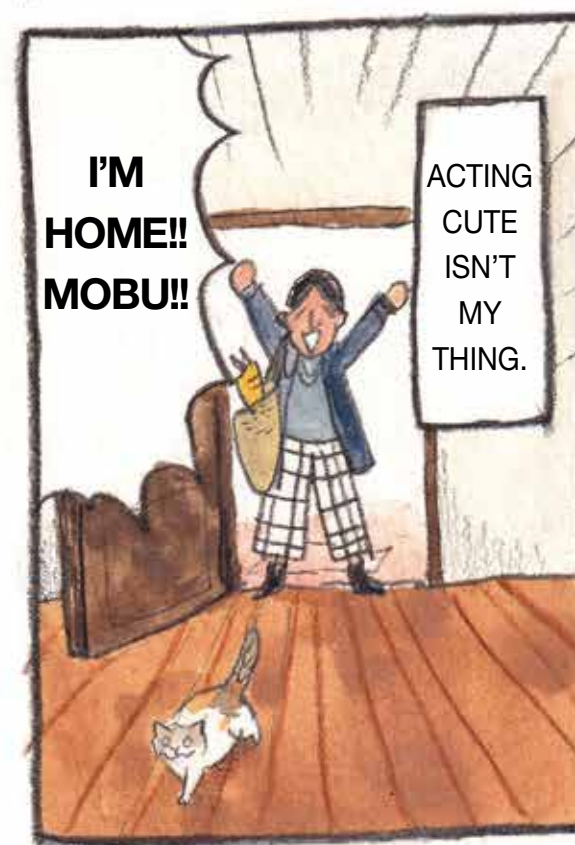
At the heart of the book is a protagonist who, despite her love of napping and fear of strangers, believes there's more to life than lounging around. Created during the pandemic,

when Lam was separated from her own cat, the drawings of Mobu express a deep yearning for connection. Through whimsical characters and soft tones of ochre and sienna, *Mobu's Diary* finds its way into our hearts and invites us to revisit its pages again and again.

Kevin Wang is a writer based in Taipei, currently co-translating *Mobu's Diary* with Cindy Ko.

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MEALTIME



SUPERVISE  
THE HUMAN'S  
CLEANING



SLEEP



PATROL THE ROOM



SIT FOR A BIT

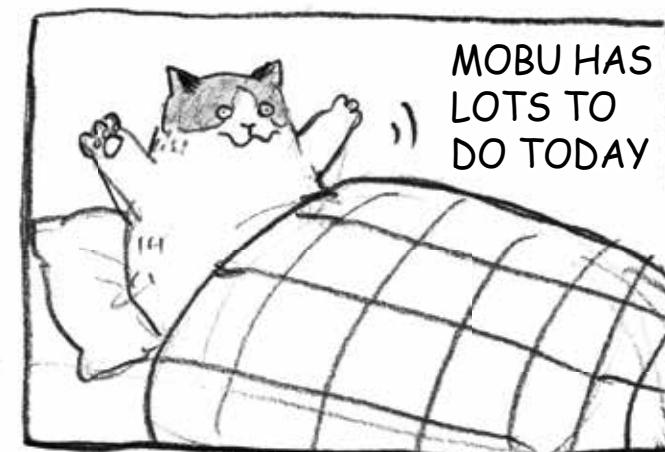


PATROL  
ANOTHER  
ROOM



A DAY IN MOBU'S LIFE

MOBU HAS  
LOTS TO  
DO TODAY



GO WAKE  
UP THE  
HUMAN



MOBU!!!





## JACK'S ARRIVAL

